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Public Health Committee

SB 252 AA Concerning the Connecticut Food Policy Council

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, ranking and members of the General Administration and Elections Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony, unfortunately, I am unable to attend in person today and I am grateful to submit this testimony for your consideration. My interest in sponsoring this legislation to strengthen CT 's Food Policy Council is the result of being a part of a network of food workers, aggregators, growers, fisheries, farmers, and others who work collaborative to address the issue of food access and sustainability in the New England States over the past six years. First as a breast cancer advocate seeking to ensure all women have access to healthy foods, and secondly, by joining two organizations that focus on food sustainability; CT Food Systems Alliance, and Food Solutions New England.

Connecticut was one of the first states in the nation to create a state food policy council in 1997, being first means we created the roadmap and had no other states who we could learn from. The intent of this bill is to strengthen the food policy and provide needed update to the statutory language, such as adding state agencies that were not included when the council was first established. It represents an opportunity to revitalize a council that could be of great service by strengthening how the state's programs respond to food-related needs. The council has struggled to be relevant in recent years, struggled to meet quorum, struggled to get appointments, and struggled to access funds that are allocated to it through the Community Investment Act.

It ensures broad representation from across the state through the inclusion of 8 members that represent a local or regional council, commission or coalition focused on food issues. The language is broad without prescriptive lists of specific areas of work (such as food pantries or food waste), which is appropriate since we can't anticipate today what those areas of work will be tomorrow.

I respectfully request that this committee approve this legislation.

Senator Marilyn Moore